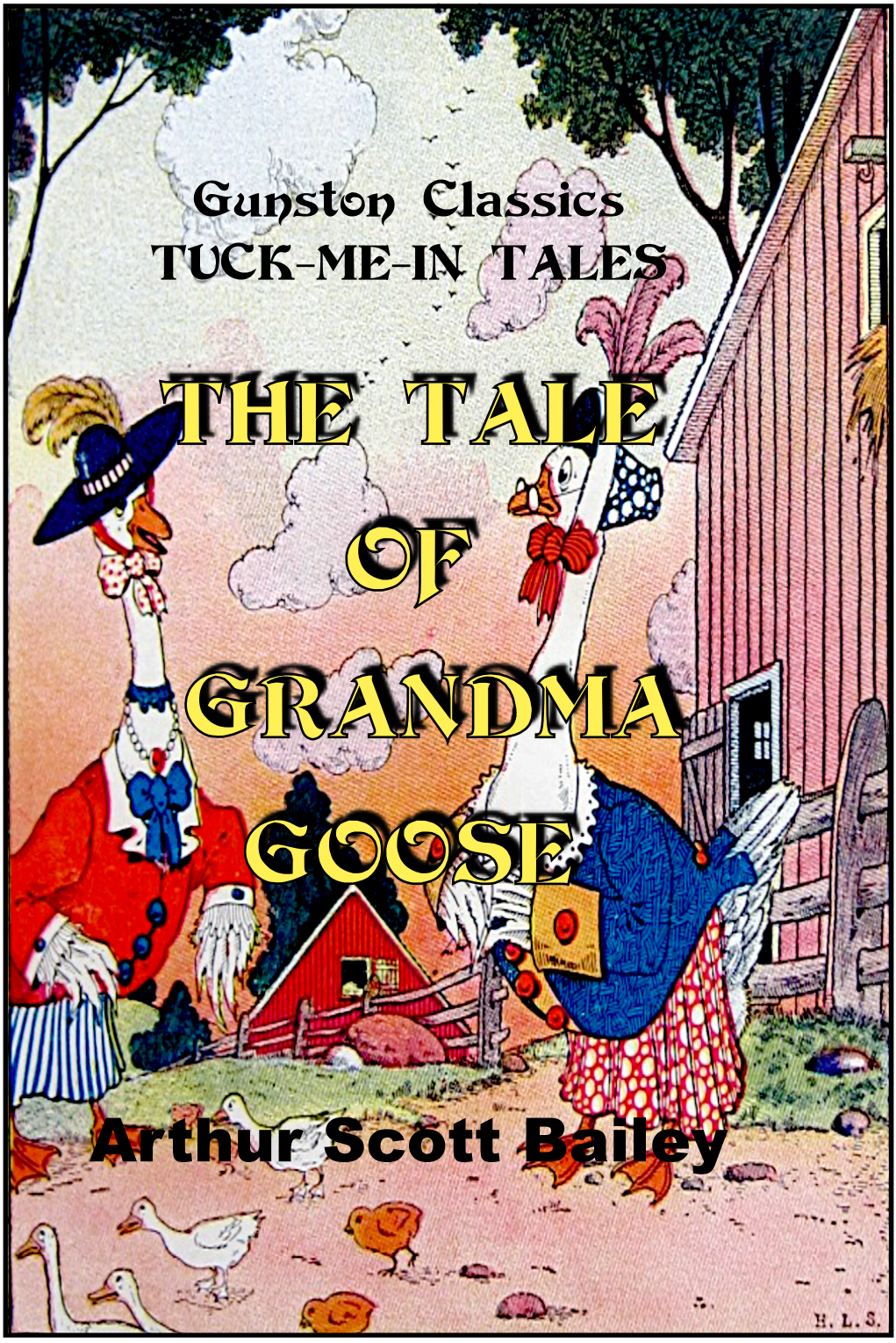

Gunston Classics
TUCK-ME-IN TALES
THE TALE OF GRANDMA GOOSE
Arthur Scott Bailey
H. L. S.

THE TALE OF GRANDMA GOOSE

By

Arthur Scott Bailey

Harry L. Smith - Illustrator

1923

Lyons Head Publishing

Gunston Classics

&

Lyons Head Publishing

© Copyright 2023

All rights reserved.
No part of this book may be
reproduced in any form or by
any electronic or mechanical means without
written permission of the author and publisher.
All text, illustrations and design, as presented, are
the exclusive property of

Gunston Classics
PO BOX 5905
Baltimore, MD 21282

CONTENTS

I.	The Naughty Gander
II.	The General Retreats
III.	A Question of Color
IV.	Fifty-Five Youngsters
V.	Miss. Kitty's Trick
VI.	A Long, Hot Walk
VII.	Old Spot's Promise
VIII.	Aunt Polly Runs
IX.	The Strange Swimmer
X.	Having Her Own Way
XI.	A Good Listener
XII.	Making Trouble
XIII.	Danger Again!
XIV.	The General Grumnles
XV.	The General Escapes
XVI.	A Deep-Laid Scheme
XVII	Early rising
XVIii	A Slap on the Back
XIX	A Very Short Swim
XX	Roosting Time
XXI	At the Wagon-Shed
XXII	Kernels of Corm
XXIII	Jimmy Rabbit Speaks
XXIV	Mr. Crow Needs a Pen
XXV	Moses Mouse's Idea
XXVI	Miss Kitty Cat's Nose
XXVII	Honk! Hon! Honk!
XXVIII	Big Bill Runs Away
XXIX	Granma is Puzzeled
XXX	Counting Noses

Grandma Goose Dashed at Miss Kitty Kat.
Frontispiece

I
THE NAUGHTY GANDER

GRANDMA Goose was very old. She had lived at Farmer Green's place longer than any other of the farmyard folk. Except for old Mr. Crow and Timothy Turtle there was no creature of wood or field or swamp in Pleasant Valley that could boast as great an age as hers.

Even the old horse Ebenezer called her "Grandma." He could remember that when he was a colt Grandma Goose was a staid person with a big family.

For many years she had been the leader of all the geese on the farm. When they went for a stroll across the road it was Grandma Goose that marched at their head. When they waddled, in single file, to the pond for their swim, it was she that led them. She told them when it was time

to come out of the water. She ordered them to "fall in" behind her. She showed them the way back to the farmyard.

Perhaps it wasn't only because of her years that Grandma Goose was the leader of the flock. Her size certainly caused the others to look up to her. She was a big, white dame—much the biggest goose that Harmer Green owned. When she wasn't
feeding, or sleeping, she always held her head very high, in a queenly fashion.
When she turned around to glance at the marching column behind her, to make sure that nobody was lagging, she seemed to look over the heads of the whole company.

Who was it that told the flock if it was going to rain? Who was it that warned them to look out for foxes and minks?
Who was it that sent the goslings hurrying for shelter when a hawk was in the sky? Who but Grandma Goose? Nobody, of course!

Although she often had a big family of her own, she was never too busy to tell her neighbors how their children ought to be brought up. And there were those that did not care for the.advice of Grandma Goose. The

mothers of other big families sometimes told one another that it was about time Grandma Goose let somebody else be the leader of the flock.

The gander, especially, disliked to be advised by her. Even less did he care to have her scold him in front of the other geese. Everybody called him "the General," though goodness knows he never went to war except once, when he fought Turkey Proudfoot and was beaten. Once, too, he said "I won't!" to Grandma Goose when she called to him to come out of the pond. "I'm going to be the leader of the flock," he told her. Grandma Goose hurried into the water.

II
THE GENERAL RETREATS

GENERAL GANDER told Grandma Goose that he wouldn't come out of the water until he had finished his swim.

"'We'll see about that!" she hissed as she swam straight towards him.

The General had never defied her before. All his life he had done just as Grandma Goose had ordered.

I'm the new leader of the flock!" he cried, so that all the geese that were near him could hear. "Rally round me! Hurry! Hurry!'

To his dismay, not one of the geese obeyed him. They didn't care to get in Grandma Goose's way just then, when she was hissing angrily.

General Gander began to look frightened. And wheeling about, he paddled madly for the further side of the pond.

"'Follow me! Follow your new leader!" he commanded.

But only one goose obeyed him. That was Grandma Goose herself. And she certainly needed no urging. In all her years of leadership, no one had ever re- fused to mind her before. And she intended that this should be the last time. She meant to teach the General a lesson and show the whole flock that it was dangerous to trifle with her.

''Rollow me! Follow your leader!'' she squawked.

And every last goose obeyed her. In the first place, they didn't dare do anything else. In the second place, they wanted to see what happened to General Gander.

Now, the General was a strong swimmer. But Grandma Goose was a stronger one. She overtook him when he was three rods from the bank. And then what a buffet she did give him over the head with her wing!

“‘Ouch!” he eried. And he promptly ducked his head under water, still swimming towards the grassy bank.

Grandma Goose kept pace with him. Whenever he raised his head she hit him again.

By the time the General set foot on land he was begging for mercy.

“‘Spare me! Spare me! I’ll never do it again!” he promised.

Grandma Goose now turned to the rest of the flock, who were gathered about them.

“‘You hear what he says?” she demanded.

"Yes, Grandma!” they answered.

“‘Good!” she said. “I’ll tell you what I’m going to do with the General, to punish him further. For the next month, whenever we’re marching, I’m going to make him walk at the tail-end of the column.” Some of the geese exchanged looks which plainly said, “She’s a bit hard on him,’”

Grandma Goose saw them.

‘Don’t be silly!”? she hissed. “You forget that the General is my own grandson.”’

III
A QUESTION OF COLOR

Every one of the farmyard folk listened politely when they first heard Mrs. Jolly Robin's story. Many of them even told her that they didn't wonder she was pleased. "Farmer'Green has certainly paid you a great compliment," some of them remarked.

If Mrs. Robin had been contented to stop right there, after she had told her news to every one, all would have been well. But she wasn't. Instead of going home and looking after her eggs, and allowing her husband to enjoy a little chat with his friends,

Mrs. Robin stayed near the barns and kept up a loud chirping.

She repeated her story, not once but a dozen times, to every one of the farmyard folk.

“My goodness!” Henrietta Hen exclaimed to Grandma Goose after Mrs. Robin had stopped her for the thirteenth time and made her listen to the tale that everybody now knew by heart. “My goodness! I wish Farmer Green hadn’t painted the farmhouse.”

“The house really needed painting,” Grandma Goose replied.

“‘Well,’”? said Henrietta, “it’s a pity that Farmer Green couldn’t have chosen some other color for the porch ceiling besides Robin’s egg blue. Mrs. Robin will never stop boasting. I’m sorry for her poor husband. He was invited to a party this afternoon; and he can’t go as he will have to stay at home to guard the eggs while his wife is boring us with her silly talk.”?

“Maybe we can do something to stop her,” said Grandma Goose.

‘Do you think you could get Farmer Green to paint the porch ceiling a different color?’’ Henrietta Hen asked her eagerly.

“No! No! Not that!’ Grandma Goose answered.

"Do you think you could get him to paint Mrs. Robin’s eggs a different color ?” Henrietta cried breathlessly.

"Oh! No, indeed!" Grandma Goose exclaimed. "Farmer Green wouldn't do such a thing."'

"Then I don't see how we're ever going to hear the last of Mrs. Robin's chatter—anyhow, not until she goes South next fall. And when she comes back next spring she'll begin to boast the moment she arrives."'

"I'll attend to her," Grandma Goose said suddenly. And hurrying up to Mrs. Robin, who was talking with a hen known as Old Whitey, Grandma Goose exclaimed, "Isn't it nice of Farmer Green ?"

'You mean the Robin's egg blue?"' inquired Mrs. Robin with a smile.

"No! Haven't you noticed that he's painting the whole house Goose egg white ?"'

Mrs. Robin looked thunderstruck. And she turned and went home without Saying another word.

IV
FIFTY-FIVE YOUNGSTERS

Aunt Gussie Goose was a distant cousin of Grandma Goose. She was one of those persons that are forever dropping hints. And one day she remarked to Grandma Goose, "I'd go to the party this after- noon if I had somebody to look after the children."'

Of course Grandma Goose knew what she meant. Aunt Gussie had ten children. And though Grandma Goose herself had twelve, she said at once that she would be glad to take care of the extra ten while their mother went to the party.

Aunt Gussie was delighted. She hurried away to the barn to get her children and bring them to the foot of the lane, where Grandma Goose and her own brood were grubbing about in the mud.

She was gone a long time. But at last Grandma Goose saw her coming.

“Good land!” Grandma _ exclaimed. “What’s this procession?”? For Aunt Gussie was leading dozens of youngsters through the fence.

“Here they are!” cried Aunt Gussie Goose. “I’ll be back late this afternoon.” And then she whisked about and hurried
off.

It was only nine o’clock in the morning. Grandma Goose knew right away that it was going to be a terribly long day. She had taken care of big families, but never a family so big as the one that Aunt Gussie had left with her.

Some of the youngsters wanted to play in the mud. Others wanted to go for a swim in the pond. And there were some that insisted they were hungry and must go to the corn crib and see if they couldn’t find some corn scattered about it. Then there were a few quarrelsome children, who were always fighting with one an- other. You may be sure that Grandma Goose had almost more than she could do, looking after them and keeping them all together.

At last she began to count them. How, otherwise, was she to know whether any of them strayed away ?

Well, she had counted up to sixteen before she stopped and said to herself, 'This one isn't a gosling. It's a duckling."" And she hadn't counted up to twenty-three when she exclaimed, "This is certainly a chick!"

After a long time she had the youngsters all counted. There were fifty-five, not counting her own family of twelve. And there were a dozen, at least, that were not goslings. It was very strange. Grandma Goose couldn't understand it. She puzzled over the matter until late in the afternoon, when Aunt Gussie Goose waddled into view around the corner of the barn.

"How many children have you?"' Grandma Goose asked her.

"Ten little ones!" said Aunt Gussie. "T do hope they're safe and well."

"They are. And so are the other forty- five that you left with me," Grandma Goose replied none too pleasantly. "May I ask whose children they are ?"

'Everybody's!" Aunt Gussie answered. 'Most of the neighbors were invited to the party. And they

asked me to leave their children with you. I knew you wouldn't mind. Everybody knows you love children."

"That's true," said Grandma Goose. 'But I'm not nearly so fond of them as I was.'"

Then Aunt Gussie began shooing the fifty-five youngsters through the fence.

"There's another party next week," she remarked as she gave the last gosling a poke to help him along.

But Grandma Goose did not take the hint this time.

V
MISS KITTY'S TRICK

"How pretty your youngsters are!" Miss Kitty Cat exclaimed to Grandma Goose. "They are little dears—every one of them! I love to look at them."

Now, you would think that anybody would be pleased by such a remark. But Grandma Goose thrust her bill towards Miss Kitty and hissed. She was angry. If there was one person about the farm- yard that Grandma Goose didn't trust, it was Miss Kitty Cat.

Grandma Goose knew that if Miss Kitty liked to look at her twelve children it was only because she hoped for a chance to steal one of them. "Keep back!" Grandma Goose warned her. 'Don't you dare come a step nearer my goslings!'"

Miss Kitty Cat crouched down and moved her tail from side to side, while she smiled at Grandma Goose.

"Go away!" Grandma Goose scolded. 'You're only wasting your time. You needn't think it will do you any good to stay here, for I shall keep such a close watch over my goslings that you won't be able to get one. I've known dozens of Cats on this farm, before your day. And not one of them ever stole a gosling from me.'"

"'Do you remember my grandmother?" Miss Kitty inquired pleasantly.

"I do," Grandma Goose replied.

"She often spoke of you," said Miss Kitty.

"Did she tell you about the time I knocked her into the pond?" asked Grandma Goose.

"No!" answered Miss Kitty Cat. " But my grandmother told me about the bed that Johnnie Green's grandmother was making with your feathers.'"

Well, when she heard that, Grandma Goose actually stopped hissing and began to smile. She was very proud of that feather bed. For years she had furnished feathers that Johnnie Green's grandmother saved until at last she had all she needed.

“That is the finest feather bed in all Pleasant Valley,” Grandma Goose deelared. “It’s in the farmhouse still.”

‘Is it? I’d like to see it,” Miss Kitty Cat told her. “Won’t you kindly step to the woodshed door and ask Mrs. Green which chamber it’s in?”’

‘I will, gladly!” cried Grandma Goose as she turned away. ““Just watch my goslings for me, while I——”’

And then she glanced back and stopped short. Already Miss Kitty had flattened herself upon the ground and was creeping toward Grandma Goose’s family.

Grandma Goose wheeled about once more. And dashing at Miss Kitty, she jabbed that sly creature with her bill and struck her with a wing.

Miss Kitty Cat dodged, ran, and climbed a tree.

“You’re even worse than your grandmother was,” Grandma Goose called to her. “When she wanted a gosling she snatched at it boldly. But you are a sneak.”’

Miss Kitty must have heard her. But she made no reply.

VI
A LONG, HOT WALK

THE summer was an unusually hot one. Several times each day Grandma Goose took her family for a swim in the pond. But she complained that it was such a long walk in the sunshine, between the pond and the farmyard, that her dip in the water did her little good. She was so warm when she reached the shade of the maple trees near the barns that she felt like turning right around and marching back to the pond.

“I know what you ought to do,”’ said old dog Spot, when Grandma Goose was telling him how she felt the heat. “You ought to wear a sunbonnet in summer.”

“I'd certainly like to,” she answered. ‘But I can’t. And there’s a good reason why.”

“‘I’m sure a sunbonnet would be very becoming to you,” the old dog remarked.

“No doubt! No doubt! But I’m not thinking how a sunbonnet would look.”

“Sunbonnets are very fashionable this summer,” old Spot went on. “Johnnie Green’s mother wore one this very morning when she went to the garden to picksome peas for dinner. And Aunt Polly Woodehuck, who lives under the hill, had one on yesterday when I chased her home from the clover patch.”’

"Oh! I dare say sunbonnets are fashionable enough,” said Grandma Goose. “The trouble is, I don’t dare to wear one.”’

“Why not?” old dog Spot inquired.

“My family is too big. I have twelve goslings,” Grandma Goose replied.

‘I don’t see why a big family should prevent your being comfortable,” Spot objected. “You ought to wear a sun- bonnet on your children’s account as much as your own. You must keep well. You don’t want to get a sunstroke, do you?”’

“You don’t understand,” Grandma Goose told him. “With a sunbonnet on my head, I couldn’t take good care of my children. Bareheaded, I can see what’s going on all around. If that awful Miss Kitty Cat comes prowling after my goslings, I

know it. If a hawk comes sailing far above the farm, I can see him. No! It wouldn't be safe for me to cover my head with a sunbonnet. I could see only what was right in front of my eyes.'"

"Just let me think a moment,"? mused old dog Spot. "There must be some way out of that difficulty ... 1 know what you ean do," he cried with his next breath. 'Cut some windows in your sunbonnet!"

VII
OLD SPOT'S PROMISE

GRANDMA Goose thought that old dog Spot's idea was a fine one. And she said right away that she would get herself a sunbonnet and cut some windows in the sides of it, so she could watch out for anybody that meant to harm her goslings.

"Thank you very much for your help!"' she said to old dog Spot. And then a blank look came over her face. "My! My!" she exclaimed. "I've just thought of something. I can't wear a sunbonnet, after all."' |

Old dog Spot wanted to know why she couldn't. 'Because Grandma Goose explained—"because those side windows wouldn't let me see the sky. And I wouldn't be able to tell if there was a hawk overhead."'

"Yes, you could," Spot insisted. "Cut a skylight in your sunbonnet."'

'I declare," gasped Grandma Goose, "I never should have thought of that. Thank you very, very much!"

Old dog Spot was as pleased as she was. “Don’t mention it!” he replied. But he really hoped she would tell everybody on the farm.

‘There’s just one thing that worries me, about wearing a sunbonnet with windows and a skylight,” Grandma Goose told him. “I’m afraid the glass might get broken.”’

“Oh! You don’t need glass in the win- dows, nor in the skylight either.”

“Very well! Then I won’t have any,”’ Grandma Goose agreed. And she began to smile happily.

‘With holes cut in it, for the breezes to blow through, your sunbonnet will be the coolest one in Pleasant Valley,” old dog Spot declared. “I shouldn’t be surprised,” he added, “if you set a new fashion. As soon as Johnnie Green’s mother and Aunt Polly Woodchuck see your sunbonnet, they’ll probably cut holes in theirs.”’ ‘that’s all very well,”” said Grandma Goose drily. “The question is, where am I going to get a sunbonnet? Answer me that if you can.”’

"You must go shopping.”

“‘What! And take twelve small children with me?” cried Grandma Goose. “Each one of the twelve would want everything he saw.”’

‘Leave the children here in the farm- yard. They’d be quite safe.”’

“No! There’s that awful Miss Kitty Cat. I don’t trust her,” Grandma Goose hissed.

“‘If I had a nose like yours I’d offer to keep her away from your family,”’ old dog Spot remarked. “But my nose is tender and Miss Kitty’s claws are sharp.”’

“Maybe you could find a sunbonnet for me, somewhere,’’ Grandma Goose suggested hopefully.

Although old dog Spot didn’t care much for that plan, he said he would do what he could. He didn’t want to disappoint Grandma Goose.

VIII
AUNT POLLY RUNS

Old dog Spot had promised Grandma Goose that he would try to get a sunbonnet for her. It had been his idea, in the first place, that she should wear one during the hot weather. But he hadn't dreamed she would ask him to do such an errand for her.

"My goodness!" he said to himself with a groan. "Where can I find a sun- bonnet ?"'

At last he trotted up to the hillside pasture, intending to ask Aunt Polly Woodchuck's advice. She always wore a sunbonnet. He hoped she would help him.

Aunt Polly was sitting on a knoll, eating clover tops. She had sharp ears. And the moment she heard Spot coming she whisked about and dashed home as fast as she could scamper.

"Stop! Stop!" Spot barked. But he had chased her too often. She only ran the faster.

He went to her front door and called to her: “I want to ask you a question. Where can I get a sunbonnet for Grandma Goose ?”’

“That old dog can’t fool me,” Aunt Polly scolded, down in her underground hall. “He needn’t think he can coax me outside, where he can grab me.”’

Old dog Spot could hear her chattering to herself. And then he suddenly spied Aunt Polly’s sunbonnet, which had fallen off her head there in her dooryard. He picked it up. “Did you say I might have this one?" he asked her.

Aunt Polly muttered something more.

“She said, ‘Yes!’” Spot cried. And stopping only to stick his nose through the doorway, he barked, “ Thank you very much!” Then he loped off toward the farm buildings, carrying Aunt Polly’s sunbonnet in his mouth.

It was lucky for Aunt Polly that it was only her second-best one.

If Spot, on his way home, hadn’t noticed half-a-dozen fat woodchucks sunning themselves near the clover patch, he would have taken the sunbonnet all the way to the farmyard and given it to Grandma Goose. But he wanted to chase those chucks. And when he came upon General

Gander in the meadow Spot dropped the sunbonnet at his feet.

‘Please take this to the lady with the big family,” he said, meaning Grandma Goose. And off he dashed.

The General looked at the sunbonnet. Then he turned and stared blankly at old dog Spot, who was already scurrying up the hillside.

“He must mean Aunt Gussie Goose,” the General decided. “She has ten goslings.”’

He had forgotten that Grandma Goose had twelve.

IX
THE STRANGE SWIMMER

General Gander looked at the sunbonnet that old dog Spot had left with him. He had intended to go to the pond for a swim all by himself. He liked to steal away from the flock of geese and take a dip alone, when Grandma Goose wasn't there to order him out of the water before he was ready to go back to the farmyard.

'I won't go and find Aunt Gussie Goose now," he decided. "I'll take this bonnet to the pond. And after I've had my swim I'll look for her behind the barn."

The day was terribly hot. The burning sunshine beat down upon the General as he waddled across the meadow and made him wish that Farmer Green would plant shade trees along the path.

Suddenly a happy thought popped into his head. He put on the sunbonnet and tied the strings under his chin. Reaching the pond at last, the General didn't stop to take off the sunbonnet, but left it on as he waded into the water.

He hadn't enjoyed a swim all summer as much as that one. The water and the sunbonnet both helped to make him feel cool. 'I believe," he murmured, "I'll keep this sunbonnet—and wear it —until Aunt Gussie asks me for it."

It must have been an hour later when Grandma Goose got her flock together and led the way to the pond for a swim.

"I wish old dog Spot would hurry and bring me my sunbonnet,"' she said to herself. "If there ever was a time when I needed it, it's to-day."'

Just as she pushed through the tall grass on the bank of the pond Grandma Goose looked upon the water and saw a sight that made her gasp. A stranger, wearing a sunbonnet, was floating lazily about near the middle of the pond.

'Now, who in the world can that be?" she muttered. "Every one of the geese is right here behind me. The only one of the flock that's missing is the General. And he wouldn't be wearing a sunbonnet."

Grandma Goose flung herself upon the water and began to paddle towards the sunbonneted swimmer. The stranger's back was turned upon Grandma. When she was within speaking distance she ealled out, "Don't you know that this pond is private property? Aren't you aware that it belongs to Farmer Green ?"'

Just then the stranger turned around and Grandma Goose saw the face beneath the bonnet. For Goodness sakes!' she cried. "It's the General!"

X

HAVING HER OWN WAY

WHEN Grandma Goose saw that it was her own grandson, General Gander, that was wearing a sunbonnet while swimming, she called to him, "Come here to me!"'

He didn't dare disobey her.

'Don't you know better than to wear a sunbonnet?"? she seolded. 'Generals never wear such things. Give that bonnet to me."'

"I—I can't, Grandma," he stammered. 'It's not mine. It belongs to somebody else."

'To whom does it belong ?"'

The General didn't care to answer that question. By this time the whole flock had come crowding about them. Aunt Gussie Goose was among the foremost.

And the General didn't wish to say that the sunbonnet was hers. He wanted to wear it himself.

"Answer me!" cried Grandma Goose, as he hesitated. .

"It's Aunt Gussie's," he explained meekly.

'Then hand it right over!" Aunt Gussie exclaimed.

Slowly the General untied the strings. Aunt Gussie snatched the bonnet and clapped it upon her head.

At that instant Grandma Goose became frightfully jealous of her. She wanted that sunbonnet herself. As leader of the flock, she thought that she—and she alone —ought to wear it.

"'I shouldn't care to wear that contraption if I were you," she told Aunt Gussie.

'Why not?" asked Aunt Gussie.

"Because it's too dangerous. How can you see a hawk in the sky? How can you see Miss Kitty Cat when she comes creeping up near your goslings? How can——"'

‘Stop! Please stop!” screamed Aunt Gussie. “You make me frightfully nervous.”? And she jerked the sunbonnet off. her head and flung it upon the water.

General Gander started to grab it. But Grandma Goose shouldered him aside and picked up the bonnet herself.

"I'll just keep this,” she remarked, as she tucked it under her wing. “I don’t want any of my flock to get into trouble. And now,” she added briskly, “you’ve had your swim. Follow me back to the farmyard!”’

There was some grumbling over that order. But Grandma Goose didn’t hear it. She led the flock away from the pond at a fast walk, because she was in a hurry to get home and do to that sunbonnet what old dog Spot had suggested.

She cut a window in each side of it and a skylight in the top. And then she put the bonnet on her head and took her twelve goslings out to play in the mud behind the barn.

She said she had never worn anything on her head that was so comfortable. And that was true. Except for feathers, she had gone bareheaded for forty years.

XI
A GOOD LISTENER

GRANDMA Goose had been the leader of the flock so many years that she liked to have her own way. She enjoyed giving orders to others. But no one could say that she didn't do her best to take good care of everybody. She knew when the birds gave their warning of a hawk overhead. She knew the signs of a storm. She could tell a rat-hole when she saw it. Such things she tried to teach the flock.

But they didn't pay much heed to Grandma Goose's talks on "safety first." So long as they had her to warn them they were content to trust their welfare to her.

Whenever the flock was enjoying a swim in the pond, Grandma Goose carried her head very high. Often she cocked it on one side. She seemed to be listening for something. And she was.

The other geese sometimes nudged one another, saying, perhaps, "She expects to hear the dinner

"Get Ashore, Everybody, and Follow Me.!"

bell—and it's only an hour after breakfast!" Or maybe they would ask one another, "Did she hear a pin-feather drop?" And then they would giggle and flap their wings.

But Grandma Goose was not as silly as those hight-minded geese would have had you think. They ought to haye known what she was listening for. She had told them again and again that a certain sound, heard at the pond, meant danger. Still they paid little or no heed to her warnings. They thought that Grandma Goose was a fussy old lady who was always looking for trouble where there couldn't possibly be any.

If Grandma Goose guessed what the other geese said about her habit of listening while they were swimming, she never paid the slightest attention to their remarks. She listened just the same.

Then, at last, there came a day when she suddenly cried, "There it is. There's the danger signal. Get ashore, everybody, and follow me to the farmyard at once!"'

The flock had been having such a fine time in the water that no one—except Grandma—had heard a certain odd noise, which sounded as if somebody had struck the surface of the pond with a shingle. But Grandma Goose's ears had caught that sound. The moment she heard it she knew what it was

and who made it. It was a muskrat slapping his tail upon the water.

XII
MAKING TROUBLE

Grandma Goose led the flock back to the farmyard, urging them all the time to hurry. She kept glancing back, too, to make sure that none of her charges stopped to find a bit of grain or a bug.

“Thank goodness you’re all safe and sound!” she exclaimed, when the last of the long line had waddled through the gateway, near the big barn.

“What was the trouble, Grandma?” General Gander inquired.

‘Don’t you know, yet, the sound of a muskrat’s tail when you hear it?” Grandma Goose asked him severely.

“I didn’t hear it this time,” said the General. |

"It’s lucky that I am the leader of the flock, and not you,” Grandma Goose told him. “No doubt that muskrat saw a mink, swimming under water. And he was giving the alarm. But a mink would

just as soon grab a young goose as a muskrat—and perhaps a little sooner.'"

General Gander backed away. He didn't like to be scolded by Grandma Goose—especially in front of the whole flock. And later, when Grandma was busy with her twelve goslings, he went about among the geese, telling them that it was nonsense to let Grandma Goose cut their swim short the way she had.

"I don't believe," said the General —'I don't believe any muskrat slapped the water with his tail. I think Grandma Goose was mistaken. Besides, why couldn't a muskrat slap the water just by accident? Grandma Goose is an old fogy. There couldn't have been any danger at all."

Some of the geese agreed with the General. They were the silly ones. But the others declared that they were glad they had minded Grandma Goose's warning. They were the wise ones.

It wasn't long before the General knew how each one felt. In a little while he gathered the silly geese in a group behind the barn, out of Grandma Goose's sight and hearing.

"I hope," he said to them, "you aren't going to let Grandma Goose spoil another swim for you the way she spoiled this one today.'"

They looked at one another uneasily. They feared Grandma Goose and the weight of her wing. They hoped the General wasn't going to ask them not to mind her orders.

Well, that was exactly what the General did.

'The next time Grandma Goose thinks she hears a danger signal, let her paddle ashore as fast as she pleases," he said. "And let those timid creatures who are now with her in front of the barn, let them follow her, if they wish. But you
ladies stay with me! We won't leave the water until we are ready to... . Do you agree?'

They all said that they agreed. They were too silly to say anything else.

The geese were Swimming in the pond again. On this day Grandma Goose found the flock somewhat hard to manage. No matter what she said, they wouldn't keep together. Half of them would straggle off, making it very difficult for Grandma Goose to keep her eye on them. And General Gander was the worst of the lot. Though Grandma Goose had spoken to him quite sharply three times, he paid Iittle heed to her.

"The General is getting unruly again," Grandma Goose muttered. "I'll have to give him something he won't forget."'

Now, the General was on the further side of the pond, close to the bank. Grandma Goose clapped her bill together in a firm way that she had. And she had already started to swim toward the General when slap! came the warning of a muskrat's tail upon the water. It was the danger signal again!

Grandma Goose began to call to the members of her flock.

"This way!' she cried. "Quick! Quick!'

Every goose began to paddle like mad. Even those silly creatures to whom the General had talked behind the barn hurried to join Grandma Goose. They were terribly frightened.

In a few minutes Grandma Goose led the flock up the bank. And there, at the top, she paused for one last backward look. She saw somebody, flapping, at the water's edge, across the pond. It was the General. He hadn't obeyed her.

'Come here this instant!' she called.

But General Gander only waved his wings the faster, without moving from the spot where he was. He answered something that Grandma Goose couldn't quite hear.

"What's that he's saying?" she asked her flock.

'I think he's ealling for help," Aunt Gussie Goose told her.

"Poor fellow!" Grandma Goose ex- elaimed. "The mink has caught him. Maybe it serves him right, because he wouldn't mind me. But I can't help feeling sorry. You know, the General is my own grandson.'"

It wasn't a very gay procession that fled back to the farmyard. Somehow the flock missed General Gander. It seemed queer not to hear Grandma Goose scolding him.

The next morning Grandma said that they'd go to the pond for their usual swim. The whole flock marched close together. There wasn't a single straggler.

"My sakes!" cried Grandma Goose as soon as she looked across the pond. 'What's that ?"

Every goose craned her neck and looked, too. Not one could believe it was the General, exactly where they had last seen him. But it was.

XIV
THE GENERAL GRUMBLES

GRANDMA Goose called across the pond to General Gander and asked him what was the matter.

The poor chap could only move a wing feebly, in reply.

Grandma Goose was a very careful body. She wouldn't enter the water to swim over to the General, nor would she let any of the flock go in the water either.

"We'll walk around on the bank," she declared. "And we'll keep an eye out for danger. Beware of a slim, long-necked, reddish fellow; for that would be Peter Mink. He may be lurking around here still. I thought last evening that he had grabbed the General. But now I don't know about that. It's all very queer." Ten minutes later Grandma Goose and her followers stood on the bank, across the pond, looking down at General Gander, who was right at the edge of the water. "What's wrong?" Grandma Goose asked him. "What's keeping you

here? Why didn't you come home last night? Why didn't you obey me when I ordered you to paddle ashore? Why do you——" 'Please don't ask me any more questions!" General Gander interrupted in a faint voice. "It's about time somebody came and took this trap off my foot."' 'Ah, ha!" eried Grandma Goose. "A trap! Stand back, everybody! This is a dangerous place." 'Don't stand back!" General Gander begged them. "Come forward! How are you going to help me, otherwise?"

"I'll take a look at that trap myself," Grandma Goose told him. Very carefully she made her way down to the General.

"A muskrat trap!" she exclaimed, as soon as she had peered at the General's foot.

'Yes!" said he. "When it snapped on my foot, yesterday, an old muskrat near- by slapped his tail on the water. And then you all hurried away and left me here to struggle the whole night long."'

'Well, we're glad matters are no worse, anyhow," Grandma Goose replied. "We had given up hope that we'd ever see you again. We thought a mink had caught you. We're delighted to find you here."

"I'm not delighted to be here," General Gander grumbled. "I want to get away from this spot just as soon as I can. I'm tired of staying here."

'Now, don't worry!" said Grandma Goose. "We'll bring you something to eat, if you're hungry. And then you can take a nap. I'll make the flock stay right here and guard you while you're sleeping."'

But her plan didn't suit General Gander at all.

"I want to go back to the farmyard,"he blubbered.

XV
THE GENERAL ESCAPES

Don't cry, General!" Grandma Goose said to General Gander, who tugged at his foot, which was caught fast in the muskrat trap. "We'll doeverything we can to get you out of this trouble. We can't take the trap off your foot. But we'll go
back to the farmyard and try to find somebody to help you.'"

The General set up a greater clamor than ever.

I don't want to be left here alone," he sobbed.

Just then Paddy Muskrat himself peeped out from a hole under the bank of the pond. "I'll tell you what you can do," he cried. "Gnaw his foot off!"

When he heard that advice the General
gave a loud shriek.

'No! No! No!" he bellowed.

"It wouldn't take half an hour," Paddy Muskrat told him cheerfully.

But General Gander wouldn't listen to his plan.

""Leave half the flock here with me, while you lead the other half home," he begged Grandma Goose.

'I shouldn't like to do that," she told him. "You know, I don't trust any of these geese out of my sight. They're silly creatures—most of them. They don't know how to take care of themselves."

If old dog Spot hadn't happened to skirt the pond, on his way to chase wood- chucks in the clover patch, there's no telling how long General Gander would have had to stay there. But Spot noticed that there was something wrong. And up he bounded. He soon found out what was the matter.

"I'll go and get Farmer Green," he offered.

'Tell him to bring an axe," said Grandma Goose.

"No! No! No!" screamed General Gander. "If he brings an axe I shall faint."'

“Farmer Green won’t need any axe,”old Spot assured the General. And off he ran toward the farm buildings.

Luckily he caught Farmer Green just as he was walking to the barn to hitch up the bays and drive them to the village. Spot barked, caught at Farmer Green’s trouser-legs, and then ran a little way in the direction of the pond. He didn’t have to repeat those actions more than a dozen times before Farmer Green knew what he meant.

“Something wrong, eh?’ he said. ‘And turning about, he followed Spot along the path through the meadow, to the pond.

He set General Gander free in no time.

“‘Good!” exclaimed Grandma Goose. “Now we can all enjoy a swim.”’

The geese all splashed into-the water. But the General dragged himself up the bank. He announced that he wasn’t going swimming again all the rest of the summer.

‘Very well!” Grandma Goose told him. “But if you’re going to stay near that muskrat run, you’d better watch your step.”’

“Yes, ma’am!”? General Gander answered meekly.

XVI
A DEEP-LAID SCHEME

They noticed——"' said Turkey Proudfoot to Grandma Goose—"I've noticed, sometimes, that you have trouble making your flock mind you." He had strutted up to Grandma Goose when she was taking her goslings for a stroll up the lane.

"My geese behave well enough, as a rule," she replied.

"But General Gander is a_ trouble-maker," Turkey Proudfoot remarked: 'Tt's easy to see that he needs a sound whipping now and then. And I'm just the person that could give it to him."'

'The General does bother me a good deal,'? Grandma Goose admitted.

'It's a pity that you should be troubled by him," Turkey Proudfoot told her. "I've been wondering

lately, if something couldn't be done to make matters easier for you. And at last I believe I have thought of a fine plan—if only you'll agree to it."

'What's that?" Grandma Goose inquired.

''Let me rule the flock for you."'

Grandma Goose shook her head. "You have your own flock to look after," she reminded him.

"That doesn't take much of my time," Turkey Proudfoot replied. "I have time to spare. And at your age, you ought to stop working for so many. You would have enough to keep you busy just looking out for your twelve goslings."'

"T've worked hard all my life," said Grandma Goose. "I'd feel lost if I had only my own little family to care for."'

"If that's the way you feel, it's high time you stopped working,"? Turkey Proudfoot declared. "Now, I dare say you've never played much."

"Never " said Grandma Goose— "unless you call swimming play."'

“It certainly shouldn’t call it anything of the sort,” cried Turkey Proudfoot with a shudder. “I understand it is very dangerous.”

“Why, swimming is as safe as—as walking, and a great deal easier,” said. Grandma Goose.

"I shouldn’t care to try it, anyhow,”’ Turkey Proudfoot replied. “But I’m glad to hear that you like it. At your age you ought to be able to take your goslings for a swim without having the trouble of looking out for a whole flock of silly geese at the same time—and that good-for-nothing young General Gander besides.”

‘It would be pleasant,” Grandma Goose agreed.

“Then let me take care of your flock for you,” Turkey Proudfoot begged her. ‘I'll herd ’em along with my own flock.”

“Oh! no, thank you!”

“Try it for a week!” he pleaded.

“Oh! no, thank you!” Grandma Goose repeated.

“Very well!’ said Grandma Goose. “You may take charge of my flock tomorrow—all except myself and my twelve goslings.”

XVII
EARLY RISING

Turkey Proudproot was in high spirits. Grandma Goose had promised to let him take charge of her flock for a whole day. He had offered to help her of his own free will. He had even begged her to go swimming with her goslings while he took her place as ruler of her geese.

Turkey Proudfoot had told Grandma Goose that she ought to stop working so hard. But there was another reason (which he did not tell her!) why he wanted to take the geese under his care. He called himself the ruler of the farm- yard. But to tell the truth, not many except the turkeys and the young gobblers paid any heed to his commands. He thought it would be very pleasant to strut about and give orders to Grandma Goose's geese. And what he especially expected to enjoy was making General Gander mind him.

On the morning when he was to take Grandma Goose's place at the head of her flock, Turkey Proudfoot woke up long before dawn. He roused his flock of turkeys
before the first hint of gray appeared in the eastern sky.

"What's the trouble?" they asked him in alarm. "Is there a fire? Is a coon trying to get us?"'

"No! No! It's time to get up,"' he told them.

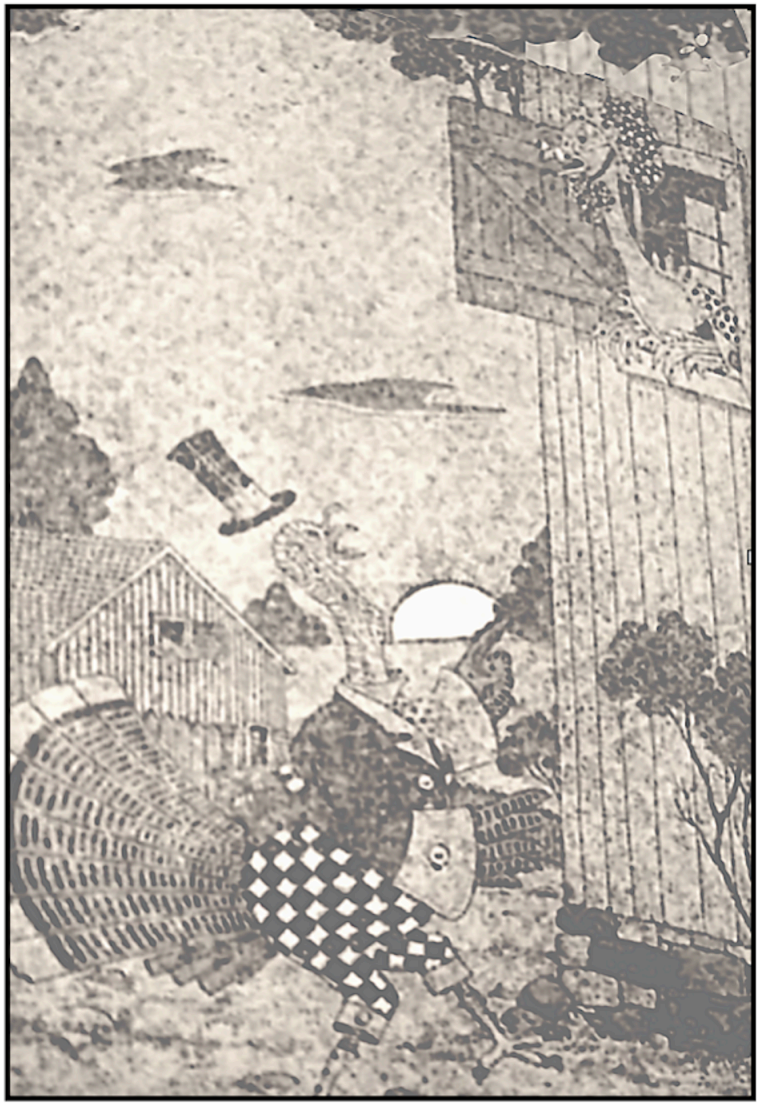
There was some grumbling when he said that.

"It's dark as midnight," somebody complained. "And cold!" added another. 'We don't want to leave the shed so early.'

"Never you mind how dark and cold it is,'? said Turkey Proudfoot sternly. '"When I say it's time to get up, all you need to do is to obey me. Lively, now!"

In a few moments the flock of turkeys was shivering in the farmyard.

"Wait here!" Turkey Proudfoot ordered. "I'm going to leave you for a short time. And don't be alarmed when you see me leading a mob back here."'



"What Do You Want?" said Grandma Goose

He went away then, to wake the fiock of geese. Outside their house he gobbled his loudest. And soon Grandma Goose answered him.

“What is it?” she called. “What do you want ?”’

“I want this flock of geese to wake up and come outside in a hurry,” he replied.

“But it’s too early to get up,” she objected. “You mustn’t disturb my flock now. Wait half an hour.”’

‘Impossible!” he gobbled in his grandest manner.

‘Well, they can’t go out until Farmer Green comes and unlocks the door,” said Grandma Goose. “And he won’t be here for half an hour, at least.”’

“What a perfectly ridiculous arrangement!” Turkey Proudfoot seolded. “I don’t like it at all. I shall have these geese roost in the wagon-shed to-night.”’

‘They haven’t the right sort of feet for roosting. They can’t roost,” Grandma Goose told him.

“T’ll make ’em roost,” Turkey Proudfoot gobbled savagely.

XVIII
A SLAP ON THE BACK

It was long past daybreak when Farmer Green turned the geese into the yard. Turkey Proudfoot had cooled his heels while he waited for them, until he was in a terrible temper. Grandma Goose, when she saw him, was almost sorry she had told him he could take charge of her flock for that day.

"'Don't be too harsh with them," she whispered to him.

He gave her a short nod; then began to give orders to the flock.

He found it no easy task to make them understand that he wanted them to join the waiting turkeys under the trees. General Gander told him that he oughtn't to gobble his orders, but hiss them.

"Silence!" Turkey Proudfoot bellowed at him. "Not another word from you, sir! You will walk ahead of me. I want to keep my eye on you. The geese will walk behind me."'

So they arrived under the trees. And while they lingered there, waiting for their breakfast, General Gander went about among the turkeys, asking them if they had noticed how he led Turkey Proudfoot and the geese across the farm-yard. "Did you see how he minded me ?"' the General asked them.

'What's that?" roared Turkey Proudfoot. "What are you saying ?"'

The General made no reply. He looked very uneasy, as he placed himself behind Aunt Gussie Goose.

Nobody else would tell what the General had said. The geese wanted to protect General Gander. And the turkeys were all displeased with Turkey Proudfoot for getting them up so early in the morning.

Turkey Proudfoot glared at his two flocks. It was lucky for them that Farmer Green soon fed them. Turkey Proudfoot was always better natured right after a hearty meal.

As soon as he had eaten, he made a joke, at which he laughed boisterously. General Gander laughed too. And that pleased Turkey Proudfoot. But then the General made a mistake. He slapped Turkey Proudfoot on the back.

“Sir! How dare you?” cried Turkey Proudfoot, drawing himself up as tall as possible and glaring at General Gander.

At that moment Grandma Goose came waddling up with her twelve goslings.

‘What’s the trouble ?” she inquired.

“He struck me,” said Turkey Proud- foot, eying the General angrily.

"Good!” said Grandma Goose. “I didn’t think he had courage enough to do that.”

"I didn’t strike him,” the General ex- plained. “I only slapped him on the back, because he made a joke.”’

"Don’t do it again,” Turkey Proudfoot warned him. “I consider it in very poor taste.”’

“Well, it was a very poor joke,” General Gander retorted.

XIX
A VERY SHORT SWIM

Not long after breakfast the flock of geese began to tease Turkey Proudfoot to take them to the pond for a swim. “Grandma Goose always gives us a swim at this time o’ day,” they told him. “No!” Turkey Proudfoot replied. "I’ve heard that one ought to wait until an hour after a meal, before going into the water. I’m surprised to learn that Grandma Goose has been so careless.”’ Though all the geese, and General Gan- der too, begged him to let them go to the pond, Turkey Proudfoot was firm. An hour and a half, at least, had passed since Farmer Green fed them, before Turkey Proudfoot led his two flocks along the path through the meadow.

As soon as they reached the pond, the flock of geese plunged into the water. The turkeys, of course, stayed on the bank with Turkey Proudfoot. There was a good deal of gobbling among them. They all thought the geese very silly creatures to go swimming.

“You ought not to allow the geese to get their feet wet,” an old hen turkey told Turkey Proudfoot.

‘I know it’s bad for their health,” he assured the lady. “But what can I do? They wouldn’t stop teasing me all day long if I didn’t let them have their swim. It’s what comes of being brought up in the wrong way. I only wish I’d had charge of these geese when they were goslings.”

‘Well,” said the old hen turkey, with a toss of her head, “you’ll be very foolish if you don’t make them come out soon.”

“I’m going to,” Turkey Proudfoot an- swered. And in a few minutes he gobbled in his loudest tones, “Time’s up! All out!’

The geese tried to tell him that Grandma Goose always allowed them to stay in the pond at least an hour.

‘It’s high time that somebody looked after your health,” Turkey Proudfoot called to them. “I mean what I say.

Very slowly they began to paddle to the shore—all except General Gander, who made haste to swim to the very center of the pond. There he paused and turned around to face Turkey Proudfoot.

“That means you!” Turkey Proudfoot bellowed at him.

The General shook his head. It was plain that he didn’t intend to mind.

Turkey Proudfoot threatened the General with every punishment he could think of. But nothing he said had the slightest effect.

‘You’ll have to go and get him,” Aunt Gussie Goose whispered to Turkey Proudfoot. “Shall I hold your watch and chain while you swim out to him?”

“No, thank you!” said Turkey Proud- foot. “I—I don’t care to swim to-day.” He wouldn’t admit that he didn’t know how.

He was wondering how he could make General Gander come in, when Grandma Goose suddenly appeared on the bank with her twelve goslings. She saw, in a glance, that the General was making trouble for Turkey Proudfoot.

‘I’ll fix him,” she muttered. And waddling down to the water, she called to the General, “Shall I come and get you?’

That was enough. The General swam to the bank in a great hurry.

‘“Thank you!’’ Turkey Proudfoot said mto Grandma Goose. “You’ve helped me. But I didn’t really need help. I was just about to think of some easy way to get him, without wetting my feet.”’

“Were you going to drain the pond?”’ Grandma asked him.

“Perhaps! Perhaps!” Turkey Proud- foot replied in his grandest manner. And he said to himself, “I won’t take ’em near water again.”’

XX
ROOSTING TIME

Turkey Proudfoot's day with the flock of geese was not nearly as pleasant as he had expected. He led them back to the farm-yard, from the pond, and hoped that his troubles with General Gander were over. But he soon found they had just begun. They hadn't been back ten minutes when Turkey Proudfoot looked around and saw the General in the watering-trough.

'Come out of that trough!" he cried angrily. "You've had your swim, over at the pond."'

"That was no swim," General Gander retorted. "It was no more than a dip."'

Turkey Proudfoot gave a run, a skip, a jump and a flap of his wings, all of which helped to land him on the edge of the watering-trough.

Meanwhile General Gander sprang out of the water and half jumped, half fell, to the ground, on the opposite side. As he left the trough, Turkey

Proudfoot lunged at him, missed him, lost his balance and tumbled into the water.

When he scrambled, dripping, to the edge once more and struggled to pull him- self out, all the geese began to titter. But all the turkeys set up a loud wail. They knew that Turkey Proudfoot was in great danger. He couldn't swim a stroke. And if Farmer Green hadn't come along just in the nick of time and fished him out, there's no telling what would have happened.

While he was drying himself in the sun, Aunt Gussie Goose came waddling up to him quite out of breath.

"The General '? she wheezed.

"What's he done now?'' Turkey Proudfoot demanded.

'He's got his head in a sack of cracked, corn, in the barn; and he won't take it out!'"

"'I'll see about that," Turkey Prevude foot cried. And though he wasn't more than half dried, he hurried to the barn. He soon gave General Gander such a buffet that that greedy fellow drew out his head. And then Turkey Proudfoot promptly thrust his own into the sack.

Two minutes later Aunt Gussie Goose came to the barn door and ealled to him. “Come quick! The General——”

“‘What’s he doing now?’’ Turkey Proudfoot mumbled, for his mouth was full of cracked corn.

“He’s leading the geese back to the pond!’

Turkey Proudfoot had to leave his lunch and overtake the procession, which was already walking along the path through the meadow. He turned the long line around. And as he led the geese back to the farmyard he couldn’t help wondering what General Gander would do next.

He soon found out. The General was more trouble than all the geese and all the turkeys in the two flocks. He kept Turkey Proudfoot on the jump all day long. And when evening came, Turkey Proudfoot was glad to see the first star peep out in the sky.

“‘Come, everybody!” he cried. “It’s roosting time. Follow me to the wagon shed.”’

He was not surprised when General Gander started in the opposite direction.

XXII
AT THE WAGON-SHED

With great strides Turkey Proudfoot dashed across the farmyard and catching General Gander, ran into him full tilt and bowled that gentleman over.

"Didn't you hear me?" Turkey Proud- foot scolded. "I said it was roosting time. I told everybody to follow me to the wagon shed."'

"You'll have to excuse me," replied the General, as he rose and smoothed his feathers. "I don't know how to roost. I'm not going to the wagon-shed."'

"That," said Turkey Proudfoot, "is where you are mistaken. About face! And march back to the other side of the yard,"

General Gander didn't dare disobey. But when he joined the flock of geese, who were craning their necks and watching anxiously, Aunt Gussie Goose told Turkey Proudfoot the very same thing.

“‘We ean’t roost,” she said. “We haven’t the proper feet for roosting.”

“Nonsense!” he blustered. “Grandma Goose made that same silly remark early this morning. Just follow me to the wagon-shed and I’ll have you geese roosting alongside the turkeys in no time.”’

There was a good deal of hissing among the geese as they went with the turkeys to the wagon-shed, following Turkey Proud- foot inside the low, open building.

“Now, roost!” he ordered.

The turkeys all fluttered up and perched on whatever they could find.

Some settled upon the rims of wagon- wheels, some on a hay-rake, some on a mowing-machine. Others flew up under the roof and rested upon the great beams. But not a goose left the ground.

"I said, ‘Roost!’” bellowed Turkey Proudfoot.

One goose, the silliest and the most timid of the flock, clambered into a wheelbarrow and tried to perch on one of the handles. She was afraid of Turkey Proudfoot; and she didn’t dare disobey.

‘There!” he exclaimed. “Look at her! If she can roost, you all can.”’

But while he was speaking, that silly goose tumbled off the handle of the wheelbarrow and fell fluttering upon the ground.

Turkey Proudfoot saw General Gander laughing at her. And that made him terribly angry.

"You’re next,” he roared at the General. “Up with you!” And he gave the General a clout with his wing and a thrust with his bill.

“‘What’s going on here?” cried a voice right behind him.

Turkey Proudfoot turned and found himself facing Grandma Goose.

"I’m making your flock roost,” he explained.

‘Well,” she said, “stop it!”’

“I shall do as I see fit,” he answered stiffly. “These geese and General Gander are in my care for a whole day. It was a bargain between you and me.”

“Yes!” replied Grandma Goose. “But the day is ended. It’s after sunset. You leave my flock alone.”

Turkey Proudfoot was never so surprised in his life. He couldn't say a word. And when General Gander began to jeer at him, he flew to the highest beam in the shed and pretended to fall asleep in-
stantly.

"Come!" Grandma Goose bade her flock. "I made a mistake when I agreed to let Turkey Proudfoot rule you for a day. I shall never do it again.'"

"But I enjoyed every minute of the day," cried General Gander.

Turkey Proudfoot started slightly when the General said that. But he didn't raise his head.

XXII
KERNELS OF CORN

Grandma Goose was talking with old dog Spot. She was telling him about Frisky Squirrel.

"He's always hanging about the farm yard, lately," she complained. "Several times he has snatched a kernel of corn just as I was going to pick it up."'

"I'd chase him; but he's too spry for me," said the old dog.

'What can I do to put a stop to his tricks?" Grandma Goose asked.

"Get the other geese to help you," he suggested.

"They can't run any faster than I can," Grandma wailed. "We never could scare that Frisky Squirrel."

'It's a pity you can't climb a tree," old dog Spot remarked, looking at her feet.

“Couldn’t you just frighten him for me?” she inquired hopefully.

"I would—gladly. But I haven’t the time,” he explained. ‘‘The woodchucks are thick as blackberries just now. I have to chase them for Farmer Green.” He thought deeply, scratching his head with a hind foot. “I know!” he exclaimed. “When you’re feeding, make the rest of the flock gather around you. Frisky Squirrel couldn’t get near you then.”’

It was a fine plan. Grandma Goose tried it. But it was useless. Frisky Squirrel dropped off the tip of a low- hanging branch and grabbed a kernel of corn from right under Grandma’s nose. She lunged at him. And he leaped over the wall of geese and scampered away.

Grandma Goose told her troubles to old dog Spot once more. And again he thought of a plan. “You must feed at night,” he said. “Frisky Squirrel sleeps all night long.”

"I never could stay awake,” Grandma Goose declared. And she strolled off to the corn crib, feeling very glum. As she stood there, who should come along but Frisky Squirrel. Before she knew what was happening, he jumped on her back,

then sprang to the side of the corn crib and popped through a crack between two boards.

"Well, what impudence!" Grandma Goose spluttered. "He needn't think I'm going to stay here to help him down to the ground again. I'll walk away and leave him there. He won't be able to get down. And I can enjoy my meals in peace.'"

But another plan went awry. When Frisky Squirrel had finished his business inside the corn crib (whatever it was!) he slipped outside and hopped down to the ground as easily as you please!

Grandma Goose was amazed to see him do that. But then, she was no jumper. She didn't even know how much simpler it is to jump down than up.

XXIII
JIMMY RABBIT SPEAKS

Grandma Goose spoke to her neighbors about Frisky Squirrel. She soon learned that there wasn't a hen or a turkey whom he hadn't cheated out of corn. Even Turkey Proudfoot, who was a gobbler, complained that Frisky Squirrel had snatched a kernel of corn away from him that very morning.

"Something ought to be done to stop such actions," Grandma Goose declared.

"Somebody ought to tell Farmer Green," Henrietta Hen piped up. And all agreed that for once in her life Henri-etta had spoken wisely.

Of course that pleased Henrietta Hen. She began to cluck in a very proud fashion. And she looked all around to see if the neighbors were admiring her.

"You go to Farmer Green and ask him to send Frisky Squirrel away from the farmyard,'' Grandma Goose said to her.

Henrietta stopped clucking.

“Oh, no!” she answered quickly. “ You, go’?

"I can’t leave my twelve children,”' Grandma Goose explained. “I can’t spare the time.”'

“Why not write Farmer Green a letter?” suggested another hen—the elderly dame known as Old Whitey. And everybody exclaimed that that was the best idea yet. That is, everybody except Henrietta Hen.

‘Who will sign the letter ?” Henrietta asked.

"We’ll all sign it,” Old Whitey told her.

‘Who’ll sign it first ?”

“Grandma Goose!” said Old Whitey. ‘She has lived here longest.”

But Grandma Goose said that her writing was so old-fashioned that she would prefer to sign the letter last.

Somehow, everybody else had just as good, or as poor an excuse for not signing the letter first. It began to look as if they couldn't send any letter to Farmer Green. And just then Jimmy Rabbit, who had been listening to this talk, sprang forward with a new plan.

"Send Farmer Green a round robin!"' he cried.

Grandma Goose thanked him. And turning to little Mr. Chippy, who was perched on the stone wall near-by, she called to him: "Won't you kindly fly over to the orchard and ask Jolly Robin to come here ?"'

Mr. Chippy was up and away in the twinkling of an eye.

"Why do you want Jolly Robin?" Jimmy Rabbit asked Grandma Goose.

'Why? Because he's the roundest Robin I know of," she retorted.

She didn't notice the faint smile that crept across Jimmy Rabbit's face.

XXIV
MR. CROW NEEDS A PEN

Jolly Robin came hurrying from the orchard, with little Mr. Chippy tagging along behind him.

‘There’s Grandma Goose,” said Mr. Chippy, “just behind the woodpile.”

“Good morning, Grandma!” cried Jolly Robin. “Mr. Chippy tells me that you want to talk with me.”’

"We want to send you to Farmer Green,” Grandma Goose told him. “We all object to the way Frisky Squirrel, comes here and takes corn that belongs to us.”’

“He took a kernel that belonged to me this very morning,” Turkey Proudfoot gobbled.

“Sh! Sh!’ Grandma Goose hissed. ‘Kindly don’t interrupt ... We want to complain to Farmer Green. Jimmy Rabbit says we ought to send him a

round robin. And I thought of you right away. You know you're fat as butter."

"Pardon me!" said Jimmy Rabbit. 'You didn't quite get my meaning, Grandma. A round robin isn't a bird."

"It isn't?" Grandma Goose exclaimed. "Don't tell me it's an animal—or a fish."

"No, Grandma! A round robin is a letter.

"Tut! Tut! This is no joking matter, young man,' said Grandma Goose sharply, as she gave Jimmy Rabbit a stern look over her spectacles.

'I'm not joking,'? Jimmy answered stoutly. "A round robin is a letter with a lot of names signed at the end of it, written all in a great circle, like the rim of a wagon wheel—only smaller, of course. That's why it's called a round robin. I thought you'd like to send one to Farmer Green, because none of you cared to sign the letter first. And if you make a round robin, he can't tell the first name from the last."'

"I believe you're not joking, after all,"' said Grandma Goose. "That's a fine idea. And I apologize to you for my hasty words . . . And now," she went on, "whom shall we get to write this complaint?" She looked at the group about

her hens, turkeys, geese. And there wasn't one that spoke up and said, "I'll write it." Not one of them could write. "You must get old Mr. Crow," said Jimmy Rabbit at last. "They say he can write."'

Well, Jolly Robin flew all the way to the cornfield, where he found Mr. Crow. And in a few moments that old black scamp settled down on the stone wall beside the company.

Grandma Goose quickly told him what was wanted.

"Ahem!" said Mr. Crow. "I can't write without a pen."

"Give him one of your wing-feathers to make a quill pen, Grandma!" cried Jimmy Rabbit.

"I'm sorry—but I can't spare a single feather," Grandma Goose answered.

"Then I can't write your complaint," Mr. Crow declared. And he smiled happily, because he didn't know how to write, anyway.

XXV
MOSES MOUSE'S IDEA

Old Mr. Crow flapped away. Jolly Robin went back to the orchard. And little Mr. Chippy returned to the stone wall and hid himself among the leaves of the wild grapevine. Farmer Green wasn't going to get any round robin. And the geese and the turkeys and the hens, still gathered behind the woodpile, were feeling quite glum. So far as they could see, Frisky Squirrel would continue to lurk about the farmyard and snatch corn that rightfully belonged to them.

"Dear me!" Grandma Goose exclaimed with a sigh. "I wish I knew of some way to send Frisky Squirrel scurrying to the woods."

"Have you consulted Miss Snooper ?"' a tiny voice piped up from somewhere inside the woodpile.

Grandma Goose stretched her long neck forward and peered into the crevices. At last she spied a pair of beady little eyes.

‘Who’s there ?” she asked.

‘I’m Moses Mouse,” came the answer. “I live in the cellar of the farmhouse. In pleasant weather I creep in here sometimes, to enjoy a sight of the sunshine.”’

‘Well! Well!’ Grandma murmured. “And who’s this Miss Snooper? I’ve never heard of such a person.”’

Moses Mouse giggled. “It’s aname we have for Miss Kitty Cat,” he explained.

Grandma Goose laughed. “She’s the only person around here to whom I haven’t spoken about Frisky Squirrel.

To tell the truth, we don’t like Miss Kitty Cat. We have to watch our youngsters closely when she’s about.”’

“And Mrs. Mouse and I have to watch ourselves, when she’s in the cellar,”’ said. Moses Mouse gloomily. “She’s a spry one. I’ve heard that she can climb a tree, though I’ve never seen her do it.”

‘It’s true. She can,” Grandma Goose replied. “And for that reason she would be a fine person to chase Frisky Squirrel.

I must speak to her about the matter. I'll ask her to chase him into the woods.'"

"Tell her not to come back," said Moses Mouse.

'Ah! That would be useless," Grandma told him. "She's too fond of milk to stay away from the farmhouse very long.'"

'It's a pity," Moses Mouse remarked dolefully, "that you can't get Frisky Squirrel to chase Miss Kitty away."

That would be impossible," replied Grandma Goose. And then she cried, 'There's Miss Kitty Cat now! I' call her."

"For mercy's sake, don't!" Moses Mouse begged. "I don't want her to find me here. Give me time to get back to the cellar.'"

"Very well! Good-by! And thank you for your help," said Grandma Goose.

Moses Mouse scampered for a hole in the cellar wall.

XXVI
MISS KITTY CAT'S NOSE

When Moses Mouse had whisked out of sight, through the hole in the cellar wall, Grandma Goose called to Miss Kitty Cat: 'Come here, please!"

Miss Kitty came trotting across the farmyard, climbed to the top of the wood- pile and looked down at the throng of geese, hens and turkeys with Grandma Goose in the midst of them all.

"I haven't tasted gosling, nor chick, this summer,"' she said, eyeing Grandma coldly.

"I should hope not!" Grandma replied with a shudder. "But that's not why I called to you. Do you know this young Frisky Squirrel who has been bobbing about the farmyard for the last fort night ?"

Miss Kitty yawned; and then she answered, "Yes!"'

“Have you ever chased him ?”

“No! The mice in the cellar have bothered Mrs. Green terribly of late. I’ve had to spend my valuable time hunting them.”’

‘We wish ” Grandma Goose went on—“we wish you’d give a little of your time to chasing Frisky Squirrel. He’s too bold.”

“Has he troubled you?” Miss Kitty inquired.

“Has he? He’s picking up corn around here, every day, that belongs to us.”

“That fellow is almost impossible to catch,” said Miss Kitty Cat. “He climbs trees.”’

‘So do you!”’

‘Yes! But he can creep far out to the tips of the branches, where I can’t go.”’

‘Well, give him a few scares.”’

“It’s not worth while—especially when my time is so valuable,” Miss Kitty replied.

Grandma Goose looked at her companions helplessly.

“What’s this meeting for?” asked a harsh voice from a tree over their heads. It was Jasper Jay. He had noticed the gathering behind the woodpile. And he wanted to know what was going on.

They told him.

“‘Don’t worry!” he croaked. “That fellow won’t bother you much longer— not this fall, anyhow.”’

“‘Why not?” Grandma inquired.

“Because,” said Jasper Jay, “the beechnuts will be ripe in another week. And then Frisky Squirrel will spend all his time in the woods.”’

“Thank you!” cried Grandma Goose. "You’ve made us all feel better.”

“All but me!” Miss Kitty Cat exclaimed. “I smell a mouse around here. And I shan’t be easy in my mind until I know where he is. Has anybody seen him ?”’

"I have,’? Grandma Goose answered.

“Where is he? Which way did he go?” Miss Kitty asked her breathlessly.

“‘My time is too valuable to stop to tell you now,”’ said Grandma Goose as she waddled away.

Miss Kitty Cat was furious. But what could she do?

XXVII
HONK! HONK! HONK!

When Frisky Squirrel vanished from the farmyard, Grandma Goose knew that the beechnuts were ripe in the woods. Fall had come. And almost daily a honk, honk, could be heard in Pleasant Valley. That, just as much as ripe beechnuts, was a sign that cold weather was coming.

"Ma!" cried one of Grandma Goose's twelve children one day. "What's that queer sound ?"'

Grandma Goose smiled. "Can't you guess?" she asked the youngster—a lad called Big Bill. He shook his head.

"It's geese," she told him.

"Geese!" he exclaimed. "The whole flock's right here in the yard. And not one of them has opened a bill—except to eat."

"Look up!" Grandma Goose suggested.

He gazed at the sky.

"What do you see?" she asked him.

"Nothing," said Big Bill, "except some dark specks moving across the sky. They stretch back two ways from a sharp point."'

"V-shaped!'? Grandma Goose re- marked. "Those specks, my son, are wild geese, flying south. The honk, honk that you hear is their call."'

"Do they always fly as high as that?"' Big Bill asked her.

"'Oh, no! Sometimes they drop down into the river, where it widens out into the bay. They stop to rest and feed. If you were there, wild geese would be more than likely to see you and come right down beside you."'

'Take me to the river, Ma!" Big Bill burst out.

"No, indeed!" Grandma Goose replied.

"Take us all to the river!" Big Bill's brothers and sisters clamored.

“Now, you may as well stop teasing,”’ Grandma Goose told her twelve children. "I haven’t been to the river for twenty years—not since Farmer Green was a young man. He used to take me there sometimes, and tie me by the leg, out in the water. He called me ‘a decoy.’ ”’

“‘What’s a decoy, Ma?”’ Big Bill demanded.

"A decoy is a tame goose that is put out to coax the wild ones down.”

“I wish Johnnie Green would take me to the river,” said Big Bill wistfully.

“You’d be terribly frightened when the gun went off. But there’s no use of talking about going to the river. I don’t want you to go there. You’re too young for such business.”’

"If Johnnie Green should take me, when would it be?’ Big Bill wanted to know.

“Oh! Not for years!’ said Grandma Goose. “Come! We'll all go to the foot of the lane now. There’s some fine mud there today.”’

Big Bill followed at the tail of the procession. He was thinking about the river and how fine it would be to visit it.

XXVIII
BIG BILL RUNS AWAY

Tuesday was drawing to a close.

"Come! It's dusk. It's time you went into the house for the night," Grandma Goose called to her twelve children. At least she supposed there were twelve, as usual. As usual, she counted them when they filed through the doorway. For she was a careful old dame.

'What's this?" she exclaimed. "Have I made a mistake?" As the last youngster waddled across the threshold, Grandma Goose had said, "Eleven!"

She tried to count the children indoors.

But it was hard work. They wouldn't stand still. She counted them again three times. 'The first time she counted fourteen; the second time, seventeen; and the third time, twenty.

“My goodness!” she said. “You’ll have to go outside and come in once more, so I ean count you as you pass through the doorway. There ought to be twelve of you—no more, and no less.”’

So Grandma Goose’s children trooped out into the yard, turned around, and went back into the house. Again, as the last one entered, Grandma Goose counted him Number Eleven.

‘“There’s certainly one missing,” she murmured. “The next thing to do is to find out which one isn’t here.”

She was quite calm. She began to call the names of her children, telling them that each must raise a wing when he heard his name.

When she called, “Big Bill!” nobody stirred.

Still Grandma Goose was unruffled. ‘Big Bill must be playing in the mud at the foot of the lane,” she said to the youngsters. “Stay here in the house while I go and get him.”’

But Big Bill wasn’t at the foot of the lane. Grandma Goose looked _ every- where for him—at the corn crib, inside the horse barn, around the pigpens. But no Big Bill did she find.

At last she began to be anxious. She hurried about, asking everybody she met, 'Have you seen my Big Bill?'"

Many of the farmyard folk didn't understand, at first, what she meant. "Why, yes! Your big bill's sticking out right in front of your face," they told her.

"No! No!" Grandma Goose told them. 'T mean my son, Big Bill."

"Oh! We haven't seen him," everybody answered.

But at last old dog Spot told Grandma that he had seen her Big Bill cross the road and waddle out of sight along the path that led to the river.

"'I might have known it!" she cried. "He's gone to the river to see the wild geese. Oh! Whatever shall I do?'"

XXI
GRANDMA IS PUZZLED

Grandma Goose hurried down the drive that led past the farmhouse, crossed the road, and started to walk along the path that led to the river, where old dog Spot had seen her son Big Bill disappear in the afternoon.

It was already growing dark. The river was half a mile away. And there were the eleven children that Grandma had left at home, to await her return. Who was going to care for them?

Grandma Goose paused. “I’ll never find Big Bill to-night,” she said to herself. “‘I’ll go home. And early tomorrow morning I’ll go down to the river.’”

So she plodded back to the farmyard.

"You haven’t caught him so soon?’” old dog Spot barked as he saw Grandma coming back up the drive.

‘No! It’s too late to look for him to- night,” she answered. “He must have reached the river, if he met with no accident. He went down there to see the wild geese. They’re flying south, you know. And often they stop in the bay to rest and feed.”’

“If he’s with the wild geese, he’s where he belongs,” the old dog growled, “for your Big Bill is a wild one himself. I’ve always noticed that he didn’t mind you any too well.”’

"Perhaps he’ll be so frightened, tonight, that he won’t run away again,”’ said Grandma Goose. “Maybe a night with the wild geese will tame him.”

Grandma Goose was more upset than she let the neighbors, or her children, know. She could hardly bear to turn her back like that, upon her lost son. But she felt that the eleven at home needed her. Who knew but that a coon, or a skunk, or a fox would break into the house during the night?

Grandma Goose passed a somewhat restless night. When she slept, in her dreams she heard the honk, honk of wild geese. She saw them flying, V-shaped, across the sky. She watched them settling down, with their weird cries, around her son Big Bill as he bobbed about like a cork, where the river widened into the bay.

Morning came at last. Farmer Green opened the door. ‘And Grandma Goose called to her children to wake up and come outside for their breakfast.

According to her habit each morning, she stood beside the doorway to count her children. Who knew but that one of them might have been stolen during the night?

As she counted the last child that crossed the threshold, a puzzled look came over her face.

‘My goodness!” she exclaimed. “This is very strange.” She had counted twelve!

XXX
COUNTING NOSES

Grandma Goose had counted twelve children, filing one by one out of the house in the early morning.

"This is queer," she muttered. 'With Big Bill missing, there ought to be only eleven."

She made the youngsters go into the house again, so she could count them as they came out once more.

For the second time she counted twelve.

Then Grandma made her goslings go in, and out, a third time. And now, as they passed her, she did not count them at all.

Instead, she peered closely at their bills.

All at once she grabbed one of the children. "What's your name?"' she cried.

"B-B-B-Big B-B-B-Bill!" he whimpered.

“Ha! I thought so,” she said grimly. "When did you come home ?”

‘Last evening !”’

‘Tut! Tut!’ she cautioned him. “You certainly weren’t here when I led the children home and counted them at bedtime.”’

‘I came home later,” he explained.

‘Ah! While I was looking for you everywhere!” Grandma Goose exclaimed. ‘I even crossed the road to go to the river, because old dog Spot had seen you starting down the path. What have you to say for yourself ?”’

“I didn’t go to the river,” Big Bill faltered. “I only went half way.”’

‘Why did you turn back ?”’

“I saw a snake.”’

Bless me!” cried Grandma Goose. She was so frightened, for a moment, that she grabbed Big Bill again and began to pet him. “And to think,” she murmured, ‘that you were right here at home all night long; and I didn’t know it!...

I don't see how we missed each other, when I was going toward the river and you were coming away from it.'"

You went around one side of the woodpile while I was going around the other," Big Bill told her with a grin. 'I saw your tail-feathers."

"Why didn't you speak to me?"

"Because I thought you were looking for me," Big Bill explained.

'Well, I'll forgive you this time, because you were out all night," she said. 'Why, no! You weren't either! How stupid of me!" she added. And she gave Big Bill a shake.

"You said you'd forgive me," he whined.
"'So I did!" said Grandma. "How stupid of me!" She let him go, then.

Anyhow," she remarked happily, "it's pleasant to be all together on the farm this beautiful morning. 'And here comes Farmer Green's wife with our breakfast !"'

THE
END

GUNSTON CLASSICS

TUCK-ME-IN TALES

- *The Tale of Jolly Robin* (c. 1917)
- *The Tale of Old Mr. Crow* (c. 1917)
- *The Tale of Solomon Owl* (c. 1917)
- *The Tale of Jasper Jay* (c. 1917)
- *The Tale of Rusty Wren* (c. 1917)
- *The Tale of Daddy Longlegs* (c. 1918)
- *The Tale of Kiddie Katydid* (c. 1918)
- *The Tale of Betsy Butterfly* (c. 1918)
- *The Tale of Buster Bumblebee* (c. 1918)
- *The Tale of Freddie Firefly* (c. 1918)
- *The Tale of Bobby Bobolink* (c. 1920)
- *The Tale of Chirpy Cricket* (c. 1920)
- *The Tale of Mrs. Ladybug* (c. 1921)
- *The Tale of Reddy Woodpecker* (c. 1922)
- *The Tale of Grandma Goose* (c. 1923)

Lyons Head Publishing